

The Patient Protection Act Protects Patients without Layoffs of Other Healthcare Workers

California	2005	2011	Percent Change
ALL RNs	125,487	153,962	+22.69%
TOTAL LVNs	11,851	8,647	-27.04%
Total Nursing Assistive Personnel	20,661	33,884	+64.00%
Total Radiology Techs	9,678*	13,004	+34.37%
Total Lab Techs	10,368*	13,304	+28.32%
Total respiratory therapists	8,877**	9,987	+12.50%

The Actual Text: What the Patient Protection Act Says

Section 3(f) of the Patient Protection Act states: The registered professional nurse-to-patient ratio established for each unit under subsection (d) does not limit, reduce or otherwise affect the need for other licensed or unlicensed health care professionals, assistants or support personnel necessary to provide safe patient care within the unit.

From Section 4(a): In addition to the direct-care registered nurse ratios requirements of subsection 3(d), each acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital shall assign additional nursing staff, such as, licensed practical nurses, licensed psychiatric technicians and certified nursing assistants, through the implementation of a valid Patient Classification System for determining nursing care needs of individual patients that reflects the assessment, made by the assigned direct care registered nurse of patient nursing care requirements and provides for shift-by-shift staffing based on those requirements.

*2006 stats / **2007 stats • Source: American Hospital Association

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Despite hospital industry claims that California's law requiring safer registered nurse staffing for patients resulted in massive layoffs of other hospital workers, the number of health care workers in California has increased—not declined—since the enactment of the law. Job growth for hospital employees has steadily increased in the years since the law was formally implemented in California—following the national pattern. The difference in California: the law has saved thousands of lives.